

DATE: SEP 2 1979

NO. 199

THE STAR

AUGUST 28, 1979

P. 21

'Saucer' sightings are sparking UFO fever in Russia

UFO fever has caught on behind the Iron Curtain... along with some typically logical Soviet explanations for the phenomenon.

Every Russian has his favorite UFO story and, unlike the U.S., the oddball is the person who doesn't believe that flying saucers exist.

One widespread story is that alien beings dropped in on two Soviet cosmonauts who recently circled the earth.

And many Russians are convinced that the American Apollo II astronauts who landed on the moon also saw UFOs; but that the

story was suppressed. "Your astronauts took pictures of them," said the director of one Moscow's most reputable cultural institutions.

Many Russian UFO stories come from the usually skeptical military and airline pilots.

On October 11, 1977, the pilots of three new Soviet military aircraft being tested near the town of Ryazan all said they saw a bright, pulsating object which flew

alongside their aircraft for 24 minutes.

The passengers and crew aboard an Aeroflot airliner also claimed to witness a similar light — a bright white disc that approached, hovered, and flew away.

A third brightly lit object is said to have crashed into another Aeroflot plane.

But some Russians are doubtful. One of them, Dr. M. Dimitriyev, writing in the Soviet

scientific journal *Aviation and Cosmonautics*, even claims to know what UFOs really are.

"What is being encountered are not UFOs, but bands of chemiluminescence, cold radiation," he says.

He explained that in the atmosphere there are microscopic, active particles which, by chemical reactions give off an energy that can change into photons.

The light from photons is usually imperceptible to the naked eye, but when particles condense, their light becomes intense.

Poll Finds: 61 Percent Of Scientists Now Believe In UFOs

An incredible 61 percent of top scientists polled now believe in UFOs — and more than half want the government to fund investigation into them.

Not only that but 8 percent of these scientists are convinced that they had seen UFOs themselves.

These are the remarkable results of a survey that was conducted by the *Industrial Research/Development* magazine which circulates exclusively to scientists in government, industry and universities.

"We tend to think of scientists as being skeptical, but I think this poll disproves that," said Bob Jones, who is the magazine's editor. "Intelligent scientists are now accepting the probability that UFOs do exist."

Of the 1,200 scientists who took part in the survey, 92 percent had college degrees and more than half of them had masters' degrees or higher.

"We ran a similar poll in 1971 and it seemed a good idea to see how attitudes toward UFOs had changed since then," explained Jones.

"What is most striking is the high number — 6 out of 10 — who at least think UFOs probably do exist. In 1971, the percentage was only 54. The 7 percent jump is entirely from those who said they 'definitely' believe that UFOs exist."

"And today only 8 percent are prepared to say 'definitely not' to the question of

whether UFOs exist." That's the same as in 1971.

In the latest survey, 27 percent said they "definitely" believe in UFOs, 34 percent said they "probably" believe, 12 percent said they were "undecided," 19 percent said UFOs "probably did not" exist. The remaining said "definitely not." According to the poll, 36 percent said they know of someone who claims to have seen a UFO.

— DAVID WRIGHT

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SEPT. 4, 1979

INFORMATION, DATA, COMMENTARY AND SPECULATION

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